

| | Budget au- thority | Outlays | Revenues |
|---|-----------------------|---------|----------|
| Current Level Over Budget Resolution | n.a. | n.a. | 105,682 |
| Current Level Under Budget Resolution | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. |

Notes: n.a. = not applicable; P.L. = Public Law; * = less than \$500,000.

¹ The effects of an act to provide for the proper tax treatment of certain disaster mitigation payments (P.L. 109-7) and the Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act of 2005 (P.L. 109-8) are included in this section of the table, consistent with the budget resolution assumptions.

Source: Congressional Budget Office.

² Pursuant to section 402 of H.Con. Res. 95, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2006, provisions designated as emergency requirements are exempt from enforcement of the budget resolution. As a result, the current level excludes \$30,757 million in outlays from funds provided in the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Tsunami Relief, 2005 (P.L. 109-13).

³ Excludes administrative expenses of the Social Security Administration, which are off-budget.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RYAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

IRAQ WATCH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I come to the House floor today as part of the ongoing effort of myself and some of my colleagues in an endeavor we style the Iraq Watch. The Iraq Watch is a group of Members who are committed to the principle that we should not forget the Iraq war, a war started based on false information and based on the principle that Members of Congress owe it to the American citizens to continue our inquiry, to continue our critique, continue to review the operations of the administration in the initiation and the prosecution of the efforts in Iraq.

We do so because we have a heartfelt and deep belief that we owe this to our troops in the field who are performing with valor and distinction in Iraq; we owe it to American citizens whose sons and daughters and wives and husbands have been called away to Iraq; we owe it to those who believe that the prosecution of war should not result in the reduction of American civil liberties; and we do it in the name of those who believe that even during the fear and anxiety caused by war that we still as citizens must demand our elected officials recognize and respect basic matters of American democracy.

In these issues, the effort we have been involved with for over a year now about once every couple of weeks, we believe that the administration regrettably has fallen very, very short of what American citizens ought to demand of their Federal Government. So today, in a continuing series of the Iraq Watch, we intend to talk about several aspects leading up to the war and a matter that has now become of very great public interest.

If I may note, it is with great sadness I note the passing of an American Marine today in operations in Iraq, to add that proud Marine to the names of over 1,750 Americans who have lost their

lives in Iraq, the over 13,000 Americans who have had very serious injuries in Iraq and to those families who will not have their family members coming home. I know every Member of this Chamber of both parties, our thoughts, prayers and compassion are with every one of those families.

It is in part because of their continuing sacrifice in Iraq that we feel very strongly that Members of the House of Representatives have an obligation, a duty not to just let things slide by, to let this administration just sort of pass by unchallenged and uncriticized in the prosecution of this war. We believe this Chamber, which is the people's House, has an obligation to blow the whistle when things are done wrong, to force the administration to fess up to mistakes they have made, and to hopefully get back on track in this Nation where we are seriously off track at the moment.

What I would like to talk about in Iraq Watch today is a very serious issue that resulted in part on the initiation of this war, and that is that leading up to this war, the administration, the President of the United States, exercised their best efforts to convince Americans that Iraq had or was very close to developing a nuclear capacity and that this was a primary rationale for the President of the initiation of the war in Iraq.

Indeed, in the President's State of the Union address standing right behind me in this Chamber, the President of the United States addressed the joint session of Congress, the Supreme Court, the Joint Chiefs, members of the Cabinet, and most importantly the American people; and he told the American people that our intelligence services had learned that Iraq had in fact obtained what is called uranium yellow cake, and he told the American people that this was well established. This yellow cake is a mineral from which uranium fissionable material can be developed, it is a precursor to an atomic weapon, and its acquisition would be of concern to the American people.

The President told the American people that this was a fact, that there was no doubt about this fact and that as a result of that, he led this Nation, against many of our positions against the war, myself included, in a war based on what turned out to be false information. We know it is false information for two reasons: one, because we have now gone through the most exten-

sive search for weapons of mass destruction in human history in Iraq and found zero, zero yellow cake, zero precursors to nuclear weapons, zero triggering devices for nuclear weapons, zero indication that the things the President had told us were fact, in fact, turned out to be falsehoods and a war has resulted and 1,700 of our sons and daughters have paid the ultimate sacrifice in the sands of Iraq and that is continuing.

We had an earlier notice that this was false. The earlier notice we had was because the Central Intelligence Agency had concerns about this issue. Before the President's State of the Union address, they had received some suggestions that this was not fact and in fact was hyperbole at best and in fact that this claim about yellow cake may have been false.

So they dispatched a gentleman who had previously served with distinction in the Foreign Service, a gentleman named Joe Wilson, to Niger from which this yellow cake was supposedly obtained by Saddam Hussein, this brutal thug, this dictator who had caused so much damage in the world; and Joe Wilson, continuing in many of his patriotic duties, went to Niger to investigate this claim. What Mr. Wilson found was that this claim was, in laymen's terms, bogus. He came back to the United States and he reported to the agency that in fact this was a fraudulent claim, there was not a basis for it, it was highly unlikely that any such transaction took place and highly unlikely that Saddam Hussein had obtained yellow cake. He issued a written report in that regard, or a written report was generated from his report.

Yet despite the fact that an agent dispatched by our government went to Niger, the scene of this alleged crime, and reported back that this was a falsehood, the President of the United States told the American people that this was one basis that we had to send our sons and daughters into mortal combat in Iraq; and it was flat, plain false.

Why did that happen? Before I tell you a little bit about the story that occurred after that, I want to tell you just a little bit about Joe Wilson. Joe Wilson has served with distinction in the State Department. Joe Wilson is a guy who does not fit the mold of a person with sort of a pinstriped suit. He is a foreign diplomat who, to use the vernacular in the main street, has guts. Joe Wilson was the last American

State Department official out of Iraq before the Persian Gulf War; and he was responsible, according to the first President Bush who honored him for his work leading up to the first Persian Gulf war when he was stationed in Baghdad, he was honored for helping save scores of Americans to get them out of Baghdad before the first Persian Gulf war started because, as you recall, Saddam Hussein had threatened Americans, to kill them when the war started when they were still in Baghdad.

Saddam Hussein essentially threatened with death anyone who helped Americans get out of Baghdad before the first Persian Gulf war. Joe Wilson, who was sort of our agent in charge of the embassy in Baghdad then, went down and held a press conference with a rope around his neck and said, you can come get me first, Saddam, because I am taking my people home. That is exactly what he did. He faced down that brutal dictator at the cost potentially of his own life to help American lives.

It was interesting. I just met a woman by accident 2 weeks ago who served in the Foreign Service who told me that Joe once went, and just before the war, to take care of some children who had been moved back to Iraq from the United States, to try to save them before the war started at great risk to his own life. Joe Wilson is a guy with guts who stood up for American lives and did it when he went to Niger to report on this yellow cake, who reported accurately, who served his country; and the President of the United States, after he gave him the truth, got up, stood right there and told the American people that there was yellow cake from Niger and it was false. Joe Wilson is someone we owe a debt of gratitude to.

What has happened to Joe Wilson since he told the truth about the President's war in Iraq? Did this administration give accolades to this Joe Wilson the way the first President Bush did? No. Did they call him up and thank him for pointing out this error in the State of the Union address? No. Was a letter sent by the President of the United States to thank him for his courage in standing up to Saddam Hussein like the first President Bush did? No. Did the President of the United States or the State Department or Scott McClellan or anyone else thank Joe Wilson for his contribution for telling the truth to the American people? No.

What did this administration do to this citizen who shared the truth with the American people? It is a sad story, but I am going to share it with you and you know it. What they did was to go after his wife to try to damage her, to hurt her career, to punish Joe Wilson for pointing out the truth. We should expect any administration, Democrat, Republican or whatever party, to punish lies, not to punish the truth. But this administration punished a truth-teller and frankly an American, maybe

hero is too strong, but I think it approaches, a guy who showed some real courage under fire in Baghdad once before and in Niger a second time and they punished him. They punished him. They could not get to him, so they went after his wife.

I do not know what is a lower thing to do under the code of the West in American Western Civilization, to go after a truth-teller's wife, to punish them when he has told the truth and spoken the truth to power.

□ 1515

It is difficult to speak truth to power and Joe Wilson did it, and look at what he got as a result. What he got was essentially an outing of his wife who news reports suggest worked for the Central Intelligence Agency as a covert agent, an agent undercover, and what he got were press reports because of an administration we now know leaks intentional leaks to the media to disclose that Joe Wilson's wife worked for the Central Intelligence Agency.

What a "thank you" to an American who did something at the request of this administration. What a great note of appreciation to essentially, number one, destroy his wife's career because once one is outed in the CIA, of course, they cannot be a covert agent anymore, number one; number two, potentially jeopardize her safety when she has been a covert agent working on weapons of mass destruction issues; number three, jeopardize the people whom she worked with who now could be suspect in her covert operations; and, number four, damage the national security of the United States by compromising a CIA agent, which this administration did.

Now, who did this in this administration? There has been some suggestion about that. There has been some suggestion that one, at least of the administration people who did this, is the Deputy Chief of Staff of the White House, and that Deputy Chief of Staff, when questions were raised a long time ago about that, about whether the Deputy Chief of Staff had, in fact, disclosed this information, let us ask as Americans whether this administration upheld its obligation to us to tell the truth. We elect the President of the United States. It is an exalted and important position, but they do work for us, and they owe us the obligation of truth in matters of national security.

Let us find out what the President's officials and the administration officials told Americans about this subject in the last several years, whether the Deputy Chief of the White House was responsible for or involved in any way in this issue. We have a briefing on July 22, 2003, a briefing where Scott McClellan, who is the press secretary for the President, on July 22, 2003, in the White House, a question was asked: "Scott, has there ever been an attempt or effort on the part of anyone here at the White House to discredit the reputations or reporting of former Amba-

sador Joe Wilson, his wife, or ABC correspondent Jeffrey Kofman?"

McClellan: "John, I think I answered that yesterday. That is not the way that this White House operates. That's not the way the President operates. . . . No one would be authorized to do that within this White House. That is simply not the way we operate, and that's simply not the way the President operates."

We would like the administration not to operate that, to leak information about CIA agents, to punish somebody who told the truth. We will see a little later in this conversation whether they did.

July 23, 2003, answer by Mr. McClellan, when asked if Karl Rove did that, Mr. McClellan said, "I haven't heard that. That's just totally ridiculous. But we've already addressed this issue. I just said, it's totally ridiculous."

We go on to an interview with Mr. Rove on September 6, 2003, Andrea Owen of ABC asked Mr. Rove, "Did you have any knowledge or did you leak the name of a CIA agent to the press?"

Rove: "No."

September 29, 2003, again to Mr. McClellan: "Has the President either asked Karl Rove to assure him that he had nothing to do with this, or did Karl Rove go to the President to assure him that he . . ."

McClellan: "I don't think he needs that. I think I've spoken clearly to this publicly . . . I've just said there's no truth to it."

Question: "Yes. But I'm just wondering if there was a conversation between Karl Rove and the President or if he just talked to you and you're here at this . . ."

McClellan: "He wasn't involved. The President knows he wasn't involved."

Question: "How does he know that?"

McClellan: "The President knows."

We now have at least four instances where the President of the United States, through his spokesperson, has told us that the Deputy Chief of Staff was not involved in any way, in any way, at disclosing this information to destroy a CIA agent's career. But it is not just four times.

On September 29, 2003, question to Mr. McClellan: "Weeks ago, when you were first asked whether Mr. Rove had the conversation with Robert Novak that produced the column, you dismissed it as ridiculous. And I wanted just to make sure, at that time, had you talked to Karl?"

Answer by McClellan: "I've made it very clear from the beginning that it is totally ridiculous. I've known Karl for a long time, and I didn't even need to go ask Karl because I know the kind of person that he is, and he is someone that is committed to the highest standards of conduct."

A question to the President. Essentially people are starting to ask what will the President do when he finds out who leaked this information. Well, let us find out what the President said he would do.

On September 30, 2003, question: "Yesterday we were told that Karl Rove had no role in it . . ."

The President: "Yes."

Question: "Have you talked to Karl and do you have confidence in him . . ."

The President: "Listen, I know of nobody—I don't know of anybody in my administration who leaked classified information. If somebody did leak classified information, I'd like to know it, and we'll take the appropriate action."

October 1, McClellan: "The President doesn't condone the activity that you're suggesting, absolutely he does not."

October 7, and I will skip the question for a moment. McClellan: "I spoke with those individuals, as I pointed out, and those individuals assured me that they were not involved in this." And that included Karl Rove, Elliot Abrams, and Lewis Libby. "And that's where it stands."

Question: "So none of them told any reporter that Valerie Plame worked for the CIA?"

McClellan: "They assured me that they were not involved in this."

So the President subsequently said he would do what he should do if he found someone was involved in any way in leaking information. He said he would fire them. And when he was in Europe last week, when he was asked what he would do if he found that out, when asked if he would fire them, he said yes. So we have this situation where we now find, through hard evidence admitted by the lawyer for the Deputy Chief of Staff, that, in fact, Mr. Rove told Mr. Cooper, a news reporter, that, in fact, he told him that Joe Wilson's wife worked through for the Central Intelligence Agency.

And for 2 years now, the official position of the President of the United States telling the American people has said, My Deputy Chief of Staff had nothing to do with this, never mentioned it, never leaked a word, never hushed it, never gave an inclination about it, totally ridiculous. And now we know the sordid truth. And it is sordid. It is sad. We should be talking about some other things here rather than this. But we believe that the truth is important to the American people.

Americans deserve the truth. They deserve not to have an administration to punish Americans who stand up against power, and that is what they did.

We now find phase one a failure of the administration to hush this up and bury this story. They denied it for 2 years. They said it was ridiculous for 2 years. They tried to suppress this information for 2 years. They refused to be candid with the American people for 2 years, and that approach has failed. So what approach are they now using to try to wiggle out from this most terrible abuse of our national security? Let us go through their sort of defenses now.

By the way, it is interesting the White House now refuses to comment on this. That has not stopped the majority party talk machine from launching an all-out offensive against Mr. Wilson today. We can read—they're still defaming Mr. Wilson today. They still have not given up thinking that if they can destroy Mr. Wilson that we will forget about the falsehood that the President used in starting this war. We are not going to forget because this really is not about Mr. Wilson. It is about our sons and daughters in Iraq. And it is about American democracy and our right to have the President tell us the truth. And we are not going to forget.

So let us see what strategies they are using now rather than just suppressing the truth. They are using the strategy that Mr. Rove did not use the name Valerie Plame. All he said was it was Joe Wilson's wife who worked at the Central Intelligence Agency; therefore, they think no harm, no foul. Whom do the Members think they are identifying if not Valerie Plame? Unless Karl Rove thought that Joe Wilson was a polygamist, had ten wives so we could not tell which one it was, it is pretty clear whom he was identifying.

Just like I started this Special Order today and I made reference to the Deputy Chief of Staff at the White House, everyone knew whom I was talking about. I did not use his name, but we know who it was. That dog just will not hunt. It is embarrassing. It is embarrassing to try to fall back on that as some excuse for violating the security laws of the United States. So that one will not work.

Second, they argued that, well, it was unintentional, did not really intend to do this. That might be because we all make mistakes, we all make misstatements, we all misspeak on occasion, myself included. Perhaps we should just forgive and forget that. Except for one thing. It is clear it was not. It is clear it was not a simple accident. The reason we know it was not a simple accident is for 2 years they covered up the truth of what happened. When people act guilty and suppress the truth, frequently it means they were guilty. And this was not innocent conduct where for 2 years the White House was saying it was ridiculous that Karl Rove would be involved in this, ridiculous. I actually think it is ridiculous now that they are not taking responsibility and being accountable. We should not have to be arguing about this right now.

They say that they were just explaining, they were just explaining how Mr. Wilson happened to be in Niger. Mr. Rove could have just explained very easily by saying some people close to Mr. Wilson knew him and wanted to send him to Niger. That could have preserved the cover of this CIA agent, and there would have been no problem.

So what we are seeing is a collapse of excuses. This is a collapse of a fabricated effort to protect the Deputy

Chief of Staff, which I understand. The Deputy Chief of Staff has been a loyal lieutenant and adviser to the President of the United States, and we can all, to some degree, respect loyalty. But when it comes down to a situation where the President is forced, through his spokesperson, to continue to not tell the truth to the American people, as it has happened here, it is unhealthy for the administration. It is unhealthy for America, and this boil needs to get lanced. It needs to get resolved. We cannot go on with this cloud hanging over the country. It needs resolution.

That is why in the next few days, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) and myself and other Members will offer a resolution of inquiry calling on the U.S. House of Representatives to get to the bottom of what happened in this situation. And this is a very simple thing that will simply request, actually require, the administration to provide answers to the American people of what happened here once and for all. We need to get this resolved and behind us. We need to find a way, a bipartisan way, to bring our troops home; to find some way to leave Iraq a stable place and bring our troops home. And we need to be involved in a bipartisan attempt to do this rather than arguing about this situation.

But until the administration is candid with the American people and we know why an administration punished an American citizen for, number one, going to Niger as requested by the CIA; telling the truth to the administration, number two; three, having the courage to tell the public about it after the President stated a falsehood during his State of the Union address; and fourth, refusing to be intimidated, and I respect people who are not intimidated by power.

□ 1530

Joe Wilson is not intimidated by power. He was not intimidated in Baghdad, and he is not intimidated now. We will not be intimidated to get to the bottom of this sordid affair. That is why we hope that on a bipartisan basis we will pass a resolution of inquiry calling to get answers to what happened in this sorry situation. Americans deserve it. It will help us move forward to get to the issues that we need to do.

Now, let me also talk about why perhaps, today and the last 2 days, if you have happened to watch the press conferences at the White House, you have noticed Mr. McClellan has been besieged by people who wanted to provide Americans the truth as we now know it about what actually happened here. Now, after telling us for 2 years, being quite willing to talk about this, saying this is ridiculous, this was just a fishing expedition, and that we should not bother with those little people over there in the corner who want to know the truth about this, now, all of a sudden, Mr. McClellan does not want to talk about this anymore. Why is that?

You have to ask yourself why, after being so loquacious about this for 2 years, now they do not want to talk about it. Well, I think it is understandable when you think about it.

Think about this: Mr. McClellan told the American people that the President knows that the Deputy Chief of Staff was not involved in this, that it was ridiculous. The Deputy Chief of Staff says, no, I was not involved in this. The President of the United States says, no, he was not involved in this, and people who were, we would fire them.

Now, you take those three individuals, somebody is not telling the truth. Somebody is not being entirely candid with the American people. The Deputy Chief of Staff is not being candid with the President, perhaps, or the Deputy Chief of Staff is not being candid with the press secretary, perhaps, or the press secretary is not being candid with the American people, perhaps. There is a third possibility, and I am not even going to suggest it on the floor of this House. But somebody is not being candid with the American people about why an American was punished for doing his duty when he was asked to go to Niger.

I mean, you think about that. You imagine if the Federal Government tomorrow called you and said, I have this tough task. I want you to go to Africa where it is dusty and hot and a big day is when you get some sugar in your tea, and I want you to find out if there is yellow cake there because we are trying to decide whether to start a war or not. It is a big, big deal. And you go there, essentially out of retirement, and you bring back the truthful answer, and you give it to the administration. They then ignore your conclusion and put it in the State of the Union address anyway, a war is talked about to be started; you have the guts enough to write an op-ed in *The New York Times* telling America what you concluded, and, all of a sudden, the entire Federal Government comes after you and destroys your wife's career. That should not happen to any American of any political persuasion. And that principle is an important one.

This is not the only time this has happened in America. You recall back in the Vietnam era where there was an author who was critical of President Nixon's war in Vietnam, Daniel Ellsberg; and he published in *The New York Times* some information that was critical of the President. So what did the President do? Did he thank him for sharing this information with the public? No. He had people burglarize Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office in order to get information to destroy Daniel Ellsberg's credibility. That President tried to destroy their critic's credibility, and that is what happened here. A different way, a different strategy, a different effort, same goal: punish critics of the administration.

We went through a Revolutionary War to get rid of King George because we believed citizens rule the country

and when citizens exercise their right of free speech and they tell the truth, nobody here in Washington, D.C. ought to be able to punish them. It was a principle worth going to the Revolutionary War about it. And in a small way, we are fighting it right here: that if you are a citizen and you tell the truth, nobody should be able to punish you, even the most powerful person in America. That is why we are filing this resolution of inquiry.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT), who has provided great leadership and who was working on this subject last year to try to bring to the attention of the country this issue. He has shown a lot of courage on this. I thank the gentleman for joining us today.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, my friend from Washington, for this Special Order and for shining a light on this subject. The gentleman is right, this is something, it is curious. I have been trying for a couple of years to draw sharp attention to this, to this exposure of the identity of someone whom we have asked to undertake risky, dangerous, important assignments for quite a long time.

The press seemed very interested in this other issue of their ability to protect their sources, not an unimportant issue, but something apart from this critical issue of how we as a country collect intelligence, what we as a country ask of people who risk their lives to collect that intelligence, and what we do about protecting their ability to do it and protecting their lives and welfare.

This is a very important matter. Former President Bush, the current President's father, said that those who expose our human sources are "the most insidious of traitors." Ten former intelligence officers signed a letter calling the disclosure of this particular officer's identity "a shameful and unprecedented event in American history." It is an uncommon occurrence, and for good reason. Thank goodness, it is uncommon.

Intelligence is intended to save lives. Intelligence is intended to protect our national security. Intelligence is intended to be something that prevents us from going to war. But to collect that intelligence, people have to take great risks. Operating undercover, perhaps under an alias, dealing with people in out-of-the-way places is often a thankless job. We do not often acknowledge the people who do that. It is a terrible thing when their effectiveness is lost through some accident. It is even worse when they are exposed by the counterintelligence people in another country.

But worst of all, of almost unthinkable tragedy, is when a person would be exposed by his or her own government. Mr. Speaker, it is not just a matter of ruining a career, it is not just a matter of an affront to a person or her spouse, it is not just the loss of probably mil-

lions of dollars that goes into developing an undercover agent, providing the cover and all that.

No, it is more than the ruined career, more than the loss to our Nation of effective intelligence. It actually puts that person at risk. And anyone who ever had lunch with that person in a foreign country is now suspected by that country as having been fraternizing with a spy. We do not know what has happened to other people in other countries because of exposure of identities of intelligence officers. That an exposure should come from our own country is almost unthinkable.

So when we raise this subject today, it is not about political "gotcha"; it is not to embarrass someone. No. It is because we as a Congress have a responsibility to look after these people whom we have asked to take great risks. And we have to make sure that this sort of thing does not happen. That is why we want to know what happened and how it happened. It is, well, like someone sending an e-mail to the enemy with a position of our troops on the map. You do not do that at wartime. That is treasonous.

Today, the members of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence on which I sit submitted a letter to the President, again underscoring the importance of this matter, abhorring the disclosure of identities of undercover officers, and asking that the President take the step of removing the security clearance from anyone known to have any association with this. We certainly know that Karl Rove, as acknowledged through his attorney, that he disclosed the identity, maybe not by name, but he might as well have; the identity of an intelligence officer to a reporter of a national news magazine.

Because the officer was undercover, her identity could be known only through access to classified information. There is ample precedent for suspending the security clearances of people under suspicion of leaking classified information. So we formally and soberly asked the President to suspend any and all of Mr. Rove's security clearances, at least and until the Fitzgerald investigation is complete. That is just one step.

But we here in Congress have an important role beyond that, a role of oversight to make sure that we, as I say, look after the welfare, effectiveness, and safety of those whom we have asked to take risks for our country so that we can know what is going on around the world, so we can avoid war, so that we can save lives, so that we can advance democracy.

I thank my colleague from Washington for this Special Order; and I hope, now that the country's attention is focused on this subject, that we really can get to the bottom of it. The President said at first that he would find and fire this person. Then a little bit later he said, you know, it is going to be really hard to find the person.

This is the same President who said we will find Osama bin Laden, wherever he is in the world. But among the 5,000 people in the White House, I am going to have a hard time finding out who it was who leaked this. Well, we know at least one person in the White House now who was party to this. The President should take action so that this sort of thing will never happen again.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New Jersey. I have to say, one of the troublesome things to me now that this disclosure has come up, here the person, at least one, there might be more people who are responsible for this besides the Deputy Chief of Staff; there may be more than one, but at least one was a person who talks to the President at least several times a day. I cannot understand when this came out why the President did not demand his inner circle to give him an affidavit saying they were not involved in this, and get to the heart of this.

Instead, the President of the United States, who works across the desk from the gentleman who is at least one of the people responsible for this leak, the most powerful man in the world could not get a straight answer. Now, if he did not get a straight answer on this important thing, then the President should exercise what he promised the American people he would do, which is to send that person on to other pursuits, and we will see whether the President meant what he said in that regard shortly.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman and mention one other thing and ask for his response. There is one other excuse that we are hearing floated about this today, and I have heard some people defending the White House saying, well, this was not really that big of a deal. We might have said there was yellow cake in there anyway, because we really did not know; we would have thrown that up in the State of the Union address anyway.

□ 1545

So no harm, no foul. I want to read something that Secretary of State Rice said on July 26, 2003, "My only point is that in retrospect, knowing that some of the documents underneath may have been, were indeed forgeries, and knowing that apparently there were concerns swirling around about this, had we known that at the time, we would not have put it in. And if there had been even a peep that the Agency did not want that sentence, or that George Tenet did not want that sentence in, that the Director of Central Intelligence did not want it in, it would not have been done."

Here we have the person sent by the CIA to get this information, reported back these were forgeries, reporting back it is highly unlikely there is yellow cake there, but the President put it in anyway, and then Secretary Rice was candid.

She said we should not have put that in. So let us not let this sort of octopus

defense of squirting ink around this thing obscure a central truth. The President gave false information to the American people, and for one reason or the another did not report what his own agent, the CIA, had sent, and then his administration punished that person.

This cries out for action by Congress.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I would say this goes beyond political punishment. We certainly could condemn his punishing the envoy who went to learn the truth about the uranium from Niger. But for whatever reason to disclose the identity of someone whom we have asked to take risks, life and death risks on our behalf is almost unthinkable.

And to do it for what appear to be gratuitous political reasons makes it all the more shameful.

Mr. INSLEE. Would it be fair to say that if these assertions are true, someone put political convenience ahead of national security? I will make that a rhetorical question.

Mr. HOLT. I cannot imagine why this name would have been released, but for the sake of creating political embarrassment for someone. I call that a gratuitous breach of national security.

There does not seem to be any higher purpose here. I suppose you might be able to imagine some circumstances where for some higher purpose you probably could dream up something where releasing the identity of, you know, someone we have put in such a dangerous position might be justifiable, but this certainly is not it.

Mr. INSLEE. Well, we would stand for the proposition that political pettiness does not justify a breach of national security. I hope we can have bipartisan consensus on that.

I would like to yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY).

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank very much the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE) for bringing this issue to the floor of the House. I think it is at the moment one of the most important issues that this Congress should be dealing with, but is not doing so.

As you pointed out, there is a great deal of dissembling going on within the context of the Bush Administration. And one of the principal people responsible for that is Mr. Rove. It is quite clear that he revealed the identity of Valerie Plame, Central Intelligence Agency operative, and the wife of Ambassador Wilson, to at least one reporter, in this particular case a reporter for Time Magazine, and that he did so in the context of e-mail.

But it is also very likely that he made that revelation not just to the reporter for Time Magazine, but to others as well. And it may very well have been Mr. Rove who made that revelation to Robert Novak, who was the columnist who published her name and made the revelation that someone working for the intelligence agency in a very sensitive position now had that

name made public, putting that person in danger.

So the question of the motivation here is one that is very important. It is quite clear that at least on one level, the motivation was to exact retribution against Ambassador Wilson, who you have pointed out rightly was sent by the Central Intelligence Agency to Niger to investigate the question as to whether or not enriched yellow cake uranium was being transported from Niger into Iraq.

The President of the United States in this room, in an address to a joint session of the Congress of the United States, and to the American people, made the assertion that enriched yellow cake uranium was being imported from Niger into Iraq, and that created the prospect that Iraq was developing nuclear weapons.

On numerous occasions, the President, the Vice President, the National Security Advisor, and others in the administration, used the illustration of the mushroom cloud in reference to Iraq, to create the impression that Iraq was developing a nuclear weapon.

Ambassador Wilson, in the context of his trip to Niger, made it very clear that no yellow cake uranium had been transported from Niger to Iraq. Nevertheless, the administration continued to allege that that is not the case, and that Iraq was engaged in a program to develop a nuclear weapon.

So what we see here in the course of this discussion this afternoon is another example of the dissembling, the misuse of information by important people within this administration. And from our point of view, as Members of the House of Representatives, one of the critical aspects of all of this is the failure of this House to address this circumstance.

We know that the allegations made by the administration with regard to the connection between Iraq and the attack of September 11 were untrue. We know that the allegations concerning the relationship between Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden were not true. We know that the allegations with regard to weapons of mass destruction, including the prospects of a nuclear weapon, were untrue.

Why is it that this House of Representatives is not carrying out its responsibilities under the Constitution to conduct an investigation and to hold Congressional hearings with regard to this issue?

Mr. INSLEE. I think you bring a very good point about Congress's obligation to investigate the executive branch. We do have a checks-and-balances system here. I think that is very important in this case, because essentially the President has said, as he said yesterday, look, this is a criminal investigation, so I have no responsibility whatsoever, he implied this, to find out what happened here.

He says, you know, there is a prosecutor here, so I have no responsibility to find out if people who work literally

in my office had outed a security agent for punishment for someone telling the truth.

Whether there was a crime or not, any President, and this President has said so, should fire a person who discloses secret information of a covert agent's identity in part to punish a person who told the truth in criticizing the administration.

Even if that is not a crime, it is a crime against the code of the west and the expectations of millions of Americans, where we do not allow our elected officials to punish us for criticizing the administration. We do not allow a President's agents to jeopardize a man's wife who is a secret agent, and expose their two young children, and this couple have two of the most delightful young children that you will ever meet in your life, and you can assume that this covert agent for the CIA mother has the same concerns about her children that you would when you are a covert agent and someone has blown your cover, and then they attack Mr. Wilson's wife.

The President has an obligation that goes beyond simply upholding this felony laws of America. His obligation to Americans is greater than that. And he ought to call these people in and say, did you have anything to do with this? And if they did, he needs to make a decision about their continued employment. And yet he refuses to do that. That is most troublesome. You know, there are fifth amendment privileges. There are all of these little technicalities in the law. This is not a technicality, we are standing up for the proposition that Americans should not be abused in this regard.

We are running out of time. I want to yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON).

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I want to very briefly take this to another level. And it is about truth and trust. I, as a former ambassador representing the United States of America, was trained in the State Department as to confidentiality and secret missions that were taking place around this globe. The audacity of someone in the Executive Branch even making reference to a covert agent violates that confidentiality and puts us all at risk.

It is not something you play with. It is not something you use for retaliation. When you out an agent, you are outing all of us.

Our intelligence functions on us having operatives in places where people are plotting against our Nation. Our defense will be in the fact that they bring that information to us and we prepare our defenses.

If these people are exposed, they no longer can gather the information that can save lives and property. So I think this is the most heinous act. I am not even going to get into the debate whether it is prosecutable or not. But, any leader in the executive branch ought to understand that you cannot have people there who will leak this in-

formation. The safety of all of our citizens depends on the confidentiality.

Mr. INSLEE. I think the Congresswoman has brought up another point, and that is, the nature of this agent who is a covert agent operating under cover for her own protection, and those people, as the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY) indicated, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) indicated, the people that she worked with, the people that she had lunch with in various countries around the world are now suspect.

But it was interesting in the litany of excuses for this misconduct that we have heard out of the White House for the last few days or at least their operatives around the country, one of the excuses I have heard is that the deputy chief of staff, Mr. Rove, did not know that this CIA agent was a covert agent. He just did not know that.

And, therefore, he wants to excuse that misbehavior since he did not know she was covert. Maybe she could have been just a receptionist at the front desk. There is a problem with that. When you out a CIA agent, you darn well better know whether they are covert or not before you violate your security clearance in outing that CIA agent.

And unless we hear a real good reason that Mr. Rove asked the CIA and was told inappropriately or something, there is no excuse for someone in the highest levels of government, with supposedly the sophistication working at the right hand of the President of the United States, not to know you did not out a CIA agent knowing they could be covert.

The damage that has been done here to our security, to Joe Wilson's spouse, to our trust in the Federal Government, was occasioned, regardless of the intention of the deputy chief of staff, one way or another there has been an abuse of both the family and our sense of national security.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, there is no way that a deputy chief of staff in the White House to even mention the name of Ambassador Wilson, not naming his wife would not know, because she is the one that sent him over there to Niger.

□ 1600

So how did Robert Novak get the information to print her name in the press? So I do not buy the excuses. I do not think the American people, knowing the truth, will buy the excuses. What we have all lost is the faith and the trust in this administration to deal straightforwardly with the American people, and as the gentleman has so brilliantly enumerated all the other misinformation activities involving this administration. We must stop it and we must stop it now because the reputation of the United States has sunk to its lowest point.

Mr. INSLEE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for joining me.

I would like to conclude with a couple of comments. This is the greatest

Nation on Earth, and it is the greatest because it works on a principle that our citizens should be in control of our democracy, not people in power.

It works on the assumption that that power will not be abused. It works on the principle that our elected officials will tell us the truth. It works on the principles that people's wives should not be attacked when a person fulfills their patriotic duty to go to Africa and ferret out the truth.

It works on the principle that people are human and they can make mistakes; but when they make mistakes, they ought to be candid and forthright with Americans. And the sooner the President of the United States is forthright and tells us what happened in this situation, the better off both for the White House and for us as a whole. And if it refuses to do that, which it is now stonewalling in its finest tradition of those who were caught red-handed, it is refusing to give Americans information.

That is why this House of Representatives needs to pass this resolution of inquiry so that we can have a bipartisan review of what happened here. Why? So that we can regain the bipartisan trust we need to go forward with and deal with our pressing problems in Iraq, our pressing problems with the threat of terrorism, and we can get back on track in this government.

Before I close, I want to thank the Wilson family for their courage in going to Africa. I want to thank Mrs. Wilson for her courage as an employee of the CIA. I want to thank them for their courage in standing up to the administration that has so willfully abused them. And I hope that the truth that they have worked so hard to bring to the American people will ultimately prevail in this affair.

HONORING RICHARD LEE WILES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Miss McMORRIS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart. I rise today to honor Richard Lee Wiles, my friend, my former economic development and technical education coordinator, and a man who was as brilliant and far-sighted as he was straightforward and unpretentious; the kind of man who brought dignity and integrity and a great deal of expertise to everything he did in life.

I am sad to report that late in June, Richard, or Dick as he was known to friends and strangers alike, passed away while conducting his duties on behalf of people of the 5th district of Pennsylvania.

Dick was more than an employee. He was a true friend and a loyal confidant. Dick graduated in 1958 from East Brady High School and in 1963 from Penn State University where he received a